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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7931
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMGH/MAGHREB COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY 0313
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0367
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0700
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 1909
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0391
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE PRIORITY
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
RUEHDS/USMISSION USAU ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 0433
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SUBJECT: JUNTA FINALLY ANNOUNCES START DATE FOR "NATIONAL
DIALOGUE ON DEMOCRACY"

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 730

[11](#). (U) The junta-designated "Prime Minister" Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf delivered a long-winded speech December 13 in which he outlined a long list of supposed accomplishments by the High State Council. He stressed the improvements in the daily lives of citizens and actions undertaken "with the goal of surmounting the institutional crisis that the former president brought to the country." Only at the very end of his speech did he mention the "National Dialogue on Democracy," stating that it was the "decisive stage" for organizing presidential elections. He announced a starting date of December 27 for the "National Dialogue on Democracy." Stating that the government will spare no effort to make the project a success, he called on all political actors to participate "so that we can correct the errors of the past and build a solid foundation for a strong and lasting democracy."

[12](#). (SBU) Comment: The "National Dialogue on Democracy" has been an often promised, and often delayed, High State Council plan. Laghdaf provided no further details in his speech on a program for the "dialogue," what exactly would be discussed, or who would participate. It is likely the HSC will try to stage-manage the discussions as much as possible, and use them to legitimize and strengthen their own position. Presumably the "dialogue" will be televised on TV Mauritania, although whether it will be broadcast live remains to be seen -- most likely TVM will use careful editing to place the discussions in the best possible light for the HSC.

[13](#). (SBU) As for participants, the anti-coup FNDD coalition has flatly stated previously that they will not participate. However, if General Aziz keeps his promise to unconditionally release President Abdallahi from house arrest by December 24 (Reftel), several scenarios become possible. Abdallahi could boycott the discussions altogether in keeping with the FNDD's position. Or, Abdallahi could declare his own "dialogue" on democracy, creating "dueling dialogues." Finally, Abdallahi may choose to send organize protests at or near the event -- likely to be broken up.

[14](#). (SBU) Finally, nominal opposition leader Ahmed Ould Daddah has not officially stated yet whether or not his RFD party will participate in the "National Dialogue on Democracy." However, Aziz saw fit to speak for him in a

recent Al Jazeera interview when he stated that Daddah was "one of the first supporters" of the coup, and that "I have no doubt his party will attend the National Dialogue." Given Daddah's perceived (or actual) cozying up to the regime, Aziz may indeed be right, thereby scoring a major point for the HSC's attempts to portray the dialogue as inclusive and reflecting the "will of the people." Charge will meet Daddah December 16. End comment.

15. (SBU) Mission officers will not participate in the Dialogue and will boycott any opening or closing ceremony. If the opportunity is given, we will send LES staff to monitor the event.

HANKINS